

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2004
CITY HALL – KIVA
3939 Drinkwater Boulevard, Scottsdale, Arizona 85251**

Present: Brian Davis, Commissioner
Mark Gilliland, Vice-Chair
David Hill, Commissioner
Vivian Johnson, Commissioner
Kelly McCall, Commissioner
Mark Melnychenko, Chairman

Staff Present: Rose Arballo
Bob Johnson
John Little
Dave Meinhart
Mary O'Connor
Paul Porell
Pat Venisnik

Others Present: Daniel Basinger, Chairman-Environmental Quality Advisory Board
Don Hadder, Planning and Development
Larry Person, Environmental Planning Services
Representative from Entellus Engineering Group
Representative from Higgins and Associates

1. CHAIRMAN MELNYCHENKO CALLED THE REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:03 P.M.

2. COMMISSION COORDINATOR ARBALLO CALLED THE ROLL

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2004

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2004. COMMISSIONER HILL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0. (Commissioner Gilliland joined the meeting at 6:09 p.m. and was not present to take action on this agenda item.)

4. INTRODUCTION OF NEW TRANSPORTATION GENERAL MANAGER AND TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIRECTOR

Mr. Little announced he has assumed a new role as Executive Director of the Downtown Group. Mr. Little introduced and welcomed Mary O'Connor as the new Transportation General Manager and welcomed Mr. Paul Porell as the new Traffic Engineering Director in Transportation.

As part of the new management team in the Transportation Department, Ms. O'Connor introduced Dave Meinhart as the Interim Transportation Planning Director.

5. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

6. ADOPT RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENVIROKIDS FEST 204 AND SOLFEST

A copy of the 2002-2003 Indicators Report was distributed to the Commission. This report provides a series of statistics gathered from a working group of Scottsdale Board and Commission members and City staff on environmental, economic, and community issues.

In conjunction with the City's focus on environmental, economic and community issues, Scottsdale is producing EnviroKidsFest '04, which will be held on April 16 at WestWorld. This is an interactive environmental event targeting 4th thru 6th grade students, however, other grade levels are invited. This event will promote kids to bike more and use public transportation.

The City will also partner with Solfest, which is another environmental event to be held on April 17 and 18 at WestWorld. Mr. Basinger stated the City and Governor Janet Napolitano have made a proclamation for these events to be special earth day events for the state of Arizona.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON MOTIONED FOR THE COMMISSION TO SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS AS IT RELATES TO TRANSPORTATION. COMMISSIONER HILL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

7. PIMA ROAD ALIGNMENT

Mr. Little commented this is an important project that has been underway for the last three years in an attempt to balance neighborhood character and traffic circulation. He stated the decision by the Transportation Commission does not bind the City to an action, but provides a recommendation to the City Council. As the project moves forward, it is the commitment of the City to continue to work with stakeholders, Ironwood Village, property owners adjacent to Pima Road, etc. City Council hearings and other discussions still need to be held to approve an engineering design contract, discuss circulation, access issues, etc.

Mr. Johnson gave an overview and presentation on this agenda item. He stated the objective for this project (Pima Road – Loop 101 to Thompson Peak Parkway) is to improve roadway safety, provide traffic relief and accommodate projected traffic, and protect neighborhood character.

Mr. Johnson stated it is important to understand that part of this project is a regional circulation plan that was adopted as part of the street circulation plan by the City Council earlier this year. He stated the emphasis of this project is on the General Plan alignment of Pima Road southbound from Hualapai, winding around and then entering the freeway. Mr. Johnson stated there are other parts of this project being considered for construction in the near future. Some of these additional construction projects are:

- Construction of Hayden from the freeway, north to Thompson Peak Parkway.
- Connection of Union Hills to 94th Street over to 92nd Street.
- Construction of 94th Street from Union Hills south to Bell Road.
- Union Hills to Thompson Peak Parkway, which will open another access point for DC Ranch and McDowell Mountain Ranch residents.
- Construction of Union Hills across the old Hayden Road as part of the Center Road project. This is part of the Stacked 40s project, which will connect to Scottsdale Road.

Mr. Johnson stated that meetings were held with stakeholders. These meetings generated concerns with Quality of life (noise/lighting/landscaping), neighborhood access, and property values.

As part of this project, Mr. Johnson stated a noise mitigation study was conducted in 1998 as part of the Pima Road to Hualapai north study. This study analyzed noise impacts to Ironwood Village residents based on the General Plan alignment and the 65-foot offset. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Dustin Watson of Higgins and Associates to give an overview of the noise mitigation criteria and the evaluation of the noise impacts to Ironwood Village and the surrounding areas.

Mr. Watson explained the process of this noise study and stated that several options to mitigate noise in the affected area were presented, but rejected by property owners. The noise buffer finally developed and acceptable to property owners consists of a 6-foot high block wall on top of a 6 to 8-foot high earthen berm with landscaping incorporated into the shield of the wall. The overall height of the buffering system is between 12 to 14 feet. It is projected that this noise buffer will reduce the noise on Pima Road to 63 decibels, which is below the ADOT criteria of 64 and below the FHWA criteria of 67. In addition to this roadway noise buffering system, rubberized asphalt will be laid on Pima Road.

Mr. Johnson added that the height of the 12 to 14 foot wall was determined based on the 1998 study projections for traffic in 2020 at approximately 57,000 vehicles per day. He stated the latest traffic projections for 2020, based on Scottsdale and Hayden Road improvements, is about 54,000 vehicles per day. Mr. Johnson emphasized that a noise analysis will be conducted as part of the final design to determine the exact height of the wall.

Overall, Mr. Johnson stated the proposed improvements by staff for the Pima Road – Loop 101 to Thompson Peak Parkway project are:

- Design Pima Road with noise mitigation between the 101 and Hualapai
- Construction of two additional lanes – Hualapai to Thompson Peak Parkway
- Integrate Ironwood Village improvements into Pima Road Plan
- Install traffic signals at Union Hills and Hualapai
- Remove existing traffic signal at Downing Olson
- Develop special standards for the Ironwood Village area which will include:
 - Noise reduction system and rubberized asphalt
 - 94th Street/Downing Olson improvements
 - Re-align Union Hills and Pima Road
 - Shift Downing Olson to the north to allow entry feature balance and additional spacing for decel/accel lane on Pima Road.

Mr. Johnson concluded his presentation and stated that staff's goal is to (1) complete a Design Concept report and authorize final engineering by March 2004; (2) complete final design of improvements and obtain Design Review Board approval in March 2004 thru March 2005; and (3) begin construction in 2005 thru 2006.

Chairman Melnychenko opened the floor for comments and questions.

The following citizens' comments were received in favor of staffs' recommendation to proceed with final design of Pima Road from Loop 101 to Thompson Peak Parkway.

Bob Schmidt, Scottsdale, AZ

Expressed his concern on the current bridge that is only 28 feet wide and asked if there will be ample room on the bridge for bikers or pedestrians once part of the sidewalk is removed. Mr. Schmidt also questioned the two sidewalks to the south.

In response to Mr. Schmidt's question, Mr. Johnson stated the bridge was engineered to accommodate future bike lanes and three lanes of traffic. He stated a sidewalk will be built in the future on the west side of the bridge. The northeast side of the bridge will contain a noise buffer wall built on a series of box culverts in the wash. This will create an extension of the bridge of about 10-12 feet. At that time, an 8-foot sidewalk would be on the back side of the bridge railings and in between the future buffering wall for that section. Mr. Johnson reiterated that Pima Road is a bike route and will have the bike lanes built as part of the improvements and the roadway will accommodate those improvements.

David Bruner, Scottsdale, AZ

Stated he is co-owner of the property located on the northwest corner of the General Plan alignment of Pima Road and Union Hills. He commended staff on their efforts of developing a solution for this project. Mr. Bruner stated that some level of design for traffic movements has been submitted to City staff for review and that a request to City staff has been submitted asking for improvements on the west side of Pima. Mr. Bruner commented that DC Ranch residents are in

favor of Union Hills being moved 55 feet to the side on the east side of Pima, but feels this will create a 55 foot gap on the west side between Mr. Bruner's property and where the roadway will be. He believes property owners will have an issue with the 55 feet that will potentially belong to the State Land Department. He stated property owners are working with City staff in an attempt to develop a solution and stated that the relocation of Union Hills to the south is a significant issue staff should be aware of.

In response to Mr. Bruner's question, Mr. Johnson commented that shifting the roadway about 55 feet to the south to accommodate the buffering systems for Union Hills and Ironwood Village requires a 55 foot setback. DC Ranch is willing to give an additional right of way to make these improvements on their side. Mr. Johnson stated the 55-foot offset will be gained back from the State Land Department when they lease the land in the future. At that time, it is anticipated that part of this lease agreement will meet the City's criteria for development to build the south side street improvements. The north side street improvements will be constructed. It is staff's intent to work with the State Land Department to allow Mr. Bruner to attain 35 feet thru purchase from the State Land Department.

Jay Harry, President-Ironwood Village Homeowners' Association, Scottsdale, AZ

Mr. Harry read a letter written by Mr. Chuck Allen, Committee Chair for the Pima Road Realignment Committee, stating he is in favor of alternative G for this project. (See attached letter from Chuck Allen.)

Nick Tarratzas, representative of DC Ranch, Scottsdale, AZ

Thanked staff for their hard work and expressed support for alternative G. Agrees with Mr. Bruner that there are still a number of things outstanding. He looks forward to receiving a detailed list of concessions to make sure everyone can agree and move forward with the project.

George Long, Commercial Real Estate Broker, Scottsdale, AZ

Spoke in behalf of the Hammill Trust who owns the 15.9 acres that access an easement into Ironwood Village and stated they support alternative G. Mr. Long expressed a concern with the need of traffic northbound on Pima Road being able to make a left turn onto this property. He commented that the ability of traffic unable to make a left turn will affect the value of the property in the long term. Mr. Long asked staff to address this issue.

Jay Gold, Scottsdale, AZ

Commended staff on the hard work dedicated to this project. Staff has managed to provide property owners what they need in a timely manner, have stayed within budget and the public right-of-ways. Mr. Gold also agrees with Mr. Long that traffic should be allowed to make a left turn onto the 15.9-acre parcel on Pima Road.

In answer to Mr. Long and Mr. Gold's question regarding access onto their property, Mr. Johnson stated this project is still in its planning stages and that an access route into the solid waste transfer station off of the old Pima Road needs to be retained. A two lane road still needs to be maintained where existing Pima is to provide outside access to the commercial developments and future developments south of Union Hills on the State Land property as well as access to the solid waste transfer station. The Downing Olson piece is a right-of-way easement granted by Mr. Helmhold's predecessors to the UDC development. Mr. Johnson stated that current plans for access to Pima Road is to construct a right in, right out southbound into Downing Olson because it is a safe turning movement for the Ironwood Village property owners. At this time, it is assumed that there will be a southbound in and southbound out, and a northbound left into the property for Mr. Helmhold's future development. Currently, Mr. Johnson does not feel this parcel of land is in the development stage to identify where the access point to this property should be.

Don Helmhold, owner of the 15.9-acre parcel, Scottsdale, AZ

Supports alternative G and agrees that access to this 15.9 acre parcel should be created.

CHAIRMAN MELNYCHENKO OPENED THE FLOOR FOR DISCUSSION.

Commissioner Johnson questioned the need for an equestrian trail along the multiuse path since Ironwood Village is not horse property. Mr. Johnson stated the equestrian trail is part of the City's master plan. The connectivity from Westworld through northern Scottsdale has always been there and will make a connection into Phoenix as part of the overall county master equestrian trail plan. The multiuse path is between the buffering system and the residents of Ironwood Village.

Commissioner Johnson asked for confirmation of two paths (an equestrian and walking path), and asked if the walking path will connect with Pima Acres southbound. Mr. Johnson stated that staff is considering a side-by-side trail with some separation of the two paths. Staff will work with the property owners and Board of Ironwood Village to determine what the width of the walking path should be. Mr. Johnson added that the walking path on the backside of the buffering system is intended to create the loop from Downing Olson to the Union Hills alignment. With regard to connectivity to Pima Acres, Mr. Johnson stated that at this time it has not been considered as part of the design.

Commissioner Johnson expressed her concern with vehicles northbound on Pima trying to make a left turn on Downing Olson. She believes this intersection is very dangerous and that the traffic signal should not be removed. Mr. Johnson stated that currently the plan is to have a right in at Downing Olson and southbound left in. With the proximity of the signal to be installed at Hualapai and Union Hills, the break up of traffic will allow for gaps to occur in a timely fashion when vehicles are turning southbound off Pima to eastbound Downing Olson.

Commissioner Johnson questioned 94th Street and asked who would have access through Ironwood Village to get to 94th Street. Mr. Johnson stated that the 94th Street connection at Ironwood Village from the new Union Hills alignment will be one lane in each direction. Staff will continue to work with Ironwood Village to develop a traffic obstacle that would encourage only Ironwood Village residents to use. Staff's recommendation is to develop a traffic circle with some type of visual blockage that would limit cut thru traffic. Mr. Johnson also stated that McDowell Mountain Ranch and DC Ranch property owners would have access to get to 94th Street through Ironwood Village. The connection will be down to Bell Road north to Union Hills. The opportunity will be to go left or right on Union Hills—left will lead to Pima Road and right will lead to Thompson Peak Parkway. If vehicles continue straight, they will end up at the old Union Hills alignment where some type of traffic mitigation device will be developed to discourage traffic from utilizing that as a cut through to Pima Road.

Chairman Melnychenko asked Mr. Johnson to address the two issues mentioned in Mr. Allen's letter; (1) Why can't Pima Road be left where it is currently, and (2) mention of support of alternative G with the assurance of the City that the 65-foot offset to the west will not happen without property condemnation action. Mr. Johnson stated that from traffic engineering design viewpoints, many alternatives were analyzed for existing Pima Road. Results showed that the curve radius of Pima Road as it approaches the freeway is unsafe. Staff anticipates that when the road is widened to three lanes in each direction, the landscaped median will eliminate the drainage issues in this section of roadway. The curve radius needs to be elevated which will require additional right-of-way to make this curve radius safer. Also, these improvements have been proposed due to agreements with the City and State Land Department that these road improvements be part of the General Plan alignment. In addition, relative to the spacing of the traffic signals at Hualapai and Downing Olson which are at 1/2 mile intervals, it is expected that signal timing and traffic movement will be coordinated in this affected area of roadway in relation with the intersection improvements at the freeway.

With regard to Mr. Allen's concern on the acquisition of the 65 feet of right-of-way, cost estimates were conducted which resulted in enough funds to cover acquisition of the right of way and the building of new facilities (northbound and southbound lanes, bridge, landscaping, buffering systems, etc.).

Commissioner Gilliland asked if discussion has taken place on the possibility of having one point of service at 94th Street thru the intersection with Union Hills and if staff felt they would benefit from distribution of traffic on a daily basis rather than from an extreme event. Mr. Johnson stated that no discussions have been held on the possibility of one point of service at 94th Street. He explained that one of the safety issues for this project is that Ironwood Village is in a floodplain and alluvial fan. Due to the fact that Pima Road was shut down for a significant number of hours because of heavy rains last year, staff feels it is unsafe to have only one access at Downing Olson. Mr. Johnson agreed that distribution of traffic

is a factor as well as staffs' experience working with communities that have one access. Having multiple access points for distribution of traffic in and out of any neighborhood is recommended to allow vehicles through in the event emergency vehicles need to block one access point.

Commissioner Gilliland expressed his concern with the Union Hills project and asked for an update. Mr. Johnson stated it is his desire to make sure that 94th Street connects to Union Hills prior to or at about the same time the Downing Olson entrance is shut down. He mentioned one positive thing about building Pima Road in this alignment is that the Pima access out from Downing Olson will remain in place during construction. Also, Pima Road traffic and Downing Olson access will not be impacted. Mr. Johnson stated that staff projects to take this issue to the City Council on March 16 to ask for authorization of the engineering services contract for final design of Pima Road improvements from the Pima Freeway to Thompson Peak Parkway and authorize acquisition of right-of-way along that area. He also anticipates the start of construction in the Spring 2005 with a completion date of Spring 2006.

Relative to the additional buffer system between residents on the east side of Pima and Pima Road, Commissioner Gilliland asked if the new trails will fold in upon common ground for Ironwood Village Homeowners' Association and asked who will be responsible for the maintenance of the new grounds. Mr. Johnson stated it is contemplated that the City will maintain the buffering wall, landscaping, and wall improvements on the west side. The landscape improvements and maintenance from the wall into the residents will be the Homeowners' Association responsibility. In addition, the Ironwood Village Homeowners' Association will most likely be responsible for maintaining the foot path on the back side of the wall between the buffering system and the privacy walls. The City's Parks and Recreation Department will maintain the path and equestrian trail.

Commissioner Gilliland mentioned that a lot of times homeowners are opposed to having paths so close to their back yards. Mr. Johnson stated that staff plans to meet with individual homeowners in Ironwood Village.

Commissioner Gilliland asked Mr. Johnson to confirm that the alignment will incorporate a shift of Downing Olson slightly to the north about 4 feet to allow installation of the sound walls. Mr. Johnson confirmed this is correct and that staff will discuss entry features with Ironwood Village residents.

Relative to the issues of maintenance, Commissioner Davis asked if right-of-way is closer to the properties than to the sound wall. Mr. Johnson stated the right-of-way is within 135 feet of existing General Plan alignment. The buffering system will be built in common area that is owned and maintained by Ironwood Village.

Commissioner Davis asked if any options were considered to avoid the low wall on the west side. Mr. Johnson stated the short retaining wall was built so that a sidewalk could be constructed adjacent to the roadway within the right-of-way.

Chairman Melnychenko asked for the timeline of construction on the connection of Thompson Peak Parkway between Bell and Union Hills. Mr. Little stated negotiations between the City and Toll Brothers are currently underway to determine who will build it and when.

COMMISSIONER HILL MOTIONED TO APPROVE STAFFS' RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CITY COUNCIL TO ALLOW STAFF TO PROCEED WITH FINAL DESIGN OF PIMA ROAD FROM LOOP 101 TO THOMPSON PEAK PARKWAY (ALTERNATIVE G). COMMISSIONER MCCALL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

8. STANDING ITEM: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Meinhart gave a brief overview and update on the regional Transportation Plan. He stated that the Governor signed House Bill 2456 on February 5, 2004 authorizing to move forward with an extension of the sales tax on November 2, 2004. He mentioned the funding program provides an allocation of 56% for freeways, 1/3 for transit, and 10% for the arterial street system. The legislation requires that performance audits be conducted every five years to make sure the investments for specific projects are keeping with the intent of the plan. With regard to the bond through the legislation, it is required that six members from the business community be appointed by the legislature to MAG's Transportation Policy Committee as part for the program for reviewing major amendment requests and any oversight.

Mr. Meinhart stated the next step would occur with the election in November. Staff will be working with the regional body to review details on how the City can implement this plan if voters approve the 1/2-cent sales tax.

Mr. Meinhart will provide more specifics on the three elements of the plan and how they affect the City.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Johnson thanked Mr. Little for his work and dedication to the City and the Transportation Commission.

Chairman Melnychenko commended staff on their presentations.

10. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER HILL MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AT 8:00 P.M. COMMISSIONER GILLILAND SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Arballo
Transportation Commission Coordinator